

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE

4
5 Courtyard Marriott Gulfport, Mississippi

6
7 April 5, 2023

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 13 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 14 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 15 J.D. Dugas.....Louisiana
- 16 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 17 Bob Gill.....Florida
- 18 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
- 19 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 20 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS

21
22 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 23 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 24 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- 25 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 26 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- 27 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 28 Troy Williamson.....Texas

29
30 **STAFF**

- 31 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 32 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 33 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 34 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 35 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 36 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 37 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 38 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
- 39 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 40 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 41 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 42 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- 43 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

44
45 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- 46 Peter Hood.....NMFS
- 47 Jim Nance.....SSC
- 48 Tom Roller.....SAFMC
- 49 John Walter.....SEFSC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1
2
3 Table of Contents.....2
4
5 Table of Motions.....3
6
7 Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes and Action Guide and
8 Next Steps.....4
9
10 A Brief Introduction on How Management Strategy Evaluation Can
11 Address Some Key Challenges Before the Council.....4
12
13 Overview of Potential Options for Regulatory Streamlining.....27
14
15 Presentation: Factors to Consider for the Inclusion of Species
16 in Federal Management.....36
17
18 SSC Report on Allocation Approaches Presentation.....49
19
20 Adjournment.....52
21
22 - - -
23

TABLE OF MOTIONS

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15

[PAGE 34](#): Motion to direct staff to begin development on a plan amendment within the reef fish FMP to streamline regulatory procedures. [The motion carried on page 35.](#)

[PAGE 44](#): Motion to direct staff to initiate an evaluation on whether African pompano needs conservation and management. [The motion failed on page 47.](#)

[PAGE 47](#): Motion to remove tripletail from further consideration for conservation and management. [The motion carried on page 49.](#)

- - -

1 The Sustainable Fisheries Committee of the Gulf of Mexico
2 Fishery Management Council convened at the Courtyard Marriott,
3 Gulfport, Mississippi on Wednesday morning, April 5, 2023, and
4 was called to order by Chairman C.J. Sweetman.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN C.J. SWEETMAN:** I will call the Sustainable Fisheries
11 Committee to order here. The members of the committee are
12 myself, Mr. Diaz is Vice Chair, Ms. Boggs, Mr. Anson, Mr.
13 Broussard, Mr. Dugas, Dr. Frazer, Mr. Gill, Mr. McDermott,
14 General Spraggins, and Mr. Strelcheck.

15
16 Okay, and so the first item on the agenda is Adoption of the
17 Agenda, Tab E, Number 1. Are there any changes to the agenda?
18 Okay. Seeing none, we'll assume the agenda approved. All
19 right. The next item is Approval of the January 2023 minutes,
20 Tab E, Number 2. Are there any changes to the minutes, as
21 written? Seeing none, we will approve the January 2023 minutes.
22 All right. The next item is the Action Guide and Next Steps,
23 Tab E, Number 3, and I will pass that over to Dr. Diagne.

24
25 **DR. ASSANE DIAGNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, and I
26 assume that we will go over these one-by-one, and I will just do
27 the first one and stop there.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you.

30
31 **A BRIEF INTRODUCTION ON HOW MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION CAN**
32 **ADDRESS SOME KEY CHALLENGES BEFORE THE COUNCIL**
33

34 **DR. DIAGNE:** For the first item today, it is a brief
35 introduction on how management strategy evaluations can address
36 key challenges before the council. The presentation will be
37 given by Dr. John Walter, of the Southeast Fisheries Science
38 Center, and he will provide an introduction to management
39 strategy evaluations and discuss how they could help in
40 addressing key challenges that the council deals with.

41
42 The overview includes examples from the recent ICCAT bluefin
43 tuna MSE as well as ongoing efforts across the Southeast. The
44 council, or the committee, should review the material and ask
45 questions and provide feedback for consideration of potential
46 next steps for using MSEs in the Gulf. Two meetings of note
47 that are coming up, and the first one is the May SSC meeting,
48 during which a whole day will be devoted to MSE discussions, and

1 the second one will be the Ecosystem Technical Committee, which
2 is going to meet later this month, April 19 and 20, to discuss
3 fisheries economic, or ecosystem, issues. Economics does
4 follow.

5
6 For both of those meetings, during this presentation, the
7 council would have an opportunity to highlight issues that they
8 would like to be considered and further discussed during those
9 meetings. I will stop here. Thank you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Diagne. All right,
12 and so up now is the presentation from Dr. Walter, a brief
13 introduction on how management strategy evaluation can address
14 some key challenges for the council, and the presentation is Tab
15 E, Number 4(a), and there's a couple of background documents in
16 there for everyone to review. Dr. Walter.

17
18 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, everyone,
19 and I'm happy to be here. I am the Deputy Director for Science
20 and Council Services at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center,
21 and I also wear a different hat as the western bluefin tuna
22 rapporteur, or coordinator, at ICCAT's Standing Committee for
23 Research and Statistics.

24
25 That's a slightly different role, in that, in that role, I'm
26 actually serving as an officer of ICCAT's SCRS, and, in that
27 role, we work to get the commission to adopt a management
28 procedure that I will discuss.

29
30 As you may have known, from some of my other interventions
31 during the course of the week, I like props, and so I brought
32 one today, and you may think that some of the things that I'm
33 going to talk about here are new, but, in fact, a lot of these
34 were really covered in the use of management strategy
35 evaluations to inform management decision-making by the regional
36 fishery management councils, which was a workshop in 2018, and
37 so, in fact, many of the council has already heard a lot of
38 this, and I think it's probably time when we can start to say
39 how can we use some of these things to address many of the key
40 challenges.

41
42 The key challenges are ones that we've been talking about pretty
43 much all week, as well as probably ones that we're going to
44 continue to face, and so I hope this will be useful for people
45 to get an idea of how we can apply this tool to address those
46 challenges.

47
48 Unfortunately, there's a couple of key definitions here, and I

1 would be remiss, as a fisheries scientist and government
2 employee, without throwing a couple of definitions up, and I'm
3 afraid that it's going to be necessary to get to understand some
4 of these things, and hopefully an understanding of it, and some
5 fluency in it, will allow us to say, okay, let's use this to get
6 this to achieve this, which is really what management strategy
7 evaluation is. It's a simulation-based analytical framework to
8 develop a robust consensus-driven and realistic management
9 procedure.

10
11 The management procedure is the pre-agreed framework for setting
12 the catch limits designed to achieve specific management
13 objectives. Essentially, it's the fully-specified recipe for
14 defining the annual catch limit and then all of the other
15 actions that will go into that.

16
17 The management objectives are the formally-adopted goals for the
18 fishery, and they're essentially what do we want out of the
19 fishery, and I think that's something that we've been asking
20 numerous times, about many of the actions that we take, and MSE
21 is a formal process to get those operational management
22 objectives on the table, write them down, and then evaluate how
23 well does our management procedure achieve them, and,
24 ultimately, then it will be a decision before this body, in
25 terms of which management procedures to adopt and they're going
26 to have ranges of performance across those objectives.

27
28 Then interim assessment, which is something we've also talked
29 about an applied to some of our stocks, and people probably
30 wonder where does that fit in, and, well, that's an intermediate
31 approach which modifies the stock assessment advice, based on
32 the value of an index, which is really a step towards the fully-
33 specified management procedure.

34
35 The outline is I'll talk about some of the key challenges in the
36 Southeast. I'll discuss management strategy evaluation, what it
37 is, and I'll motivate that with an example of Atlantic bluefin
38 tuna, and then I'll talk about how does that fit into our
39 Magnuson-Stevens Act framework for providing management advice,
40 and I think that's a key question that many people have, and I
41 will try to give at least my view of how it could be fit in. I
42 will introduce our MSE strategic plan, which is one of the
43 background documents, and then some of the steps forward that I
44 think we can take.

45
46 I will put the take-home message upfront, in case people want to
47 tune-out for the rest of it, and I think that is, in these
48 management procedures developed through MSE, the process to

1 develop the management procedure, it allows the council to test
2 the management they want to put in place before they put it into
3 place, and I think, as a decision-maker, you would to know if
4 this is going to be robust to the uncertainties that we have, is
5 this tested, and you wouldn't get into your car without thinking
6 that it's going to have to be tested, and crash tested, to meet
7 certain performance standards, and I think we would like that
8 certainty for our fisheries management.

9
10 Why management procedures? Why might we want to think about
11 them? Well, there's a lot of things that are happening in the
12 environment, particularly the environmental changes and non-
13 stationarity, but the things that we assumed are constant are
14 likely to not be in the future, and how do we develop robust
15 management that can account for the changes that may be rapid,
16 and may come, and then we have -- Many people are desiring a
17 more explicit incorporation of diverse management objectives,
18 rather than simply just yield, and we're hearing that there's a
19 lot of other things that stakeholders want, and then what I want
20 -- The main message for people to say is, well, this is great.
21 At the end of it, you may say the MSE sounds great, and it's
22 wonderful, and this would be a great thing to apply.

23
24 Well, the bluefin MSE took eight years to get adopted, and so I
25 would say that the caveat is that you want to have a clear
26 objective for what you're going to want to achieve, match the
27 resources to the scope of the problem, and MSE is neither cheap
28 nor easy, and then reserve the full power of stakeholder-
29 inclusive MSE for the highest profile problems, and we don't
30 want to bring all the stakeholders in for things that could be
31 done simply by an analyst on the desk. I can stop here, but I
32 will keep going.

33
34 I think we've talked about this thing called optimum yield, and
35 you can read the definition from the National Standard
36 Guidelines. It's somewhat vague, in terms of what the relevant
37 economic, social, and ecological factors are. It doesn't define
38 those. Those need to be defined as part of the process for
39 management. Why do we want, economically, socially,
40 ecologically, and then how do find that compromise position of
41 what optimal yield is?

42
43 My gut feeling is that we're not going to solve for optimal
44 yield out of our models, partly because we don't have the data,
45 but partly because things like social factors, and ecological
46 factors, are extremely hard to quantify, and so we're going to
47 compromise an optimal yield while we're accounting for those
48 other factors.

1
2 Non-stationarity, and I think something that is just -- Non-
3 stationarity is somewhat of a scientific jargon for things are
4 going to change in the future, and maybe the past has not been
5 constant, and I think we've seen many examples of that, and one
6 of the probably most pertinent examples is a paper that was
7 recently published by a lead author from Mississippi State
8 University that says the Gulf of Mexico is warming at twice the
9 rate of the sea around it.

10
11 I think that people who are on the water know, and intimately
12 know, that non-stationarity exists, that the environment
13 changes, and those that environmental changes can be rapid, but
14 they pose a substantial challenge to our management, because our
15 management isn't always as rapid and adaptive as it might need
16 to be to account for that.

17
18 Then ecosystem-based fisheries management is something that we
19 talk about a lot, but we rarely have the structure for
20 incorporating it into our management. MSE allows that
21 potential.

22
23 Then a lot of things that we want to test that are tactical
24 management actions, like bag limits, size limits, allocations,
25 how you achieve that annual catch limit. We often want to know
26 if this is going to work, and those can sometimes be addressed
27 simply with projections, or the decision support tool, but
28 sometimes you want to test them in a full feedback loop
29 simulation process.

30
31 MSE is a simulation-based framework, in that there is
32 simulations that allow us to test different management
33 procedures, and there is a feedback loop where your management
34 procedure operates on the simulated populations, and it takes
35 the catch out, and it feeds it back in, and then you get a
36 response, and that response provides you maybe your indices that
37 you might be using for the management procedure.

38
39 There's a number of other things that are involved in it, but
40 one of the central things is a catch control rule, or the rule
41 that defines how the catch is going to be derived, and then
42 that's fed back into our operating models, and a key thing about
43 the operating models, and this is another jargon, and sorry,
44 but, really, that's something that came through what we use for
45 stock assessment models, but, instead of there being one, there
46 are many of them that account for many of the uncertainties that
47 we might have, and so we often, when we do stock assessments,
48 incorporate uncertainties with sensitivity runs, and, here, your

1 sensitivity runs would be included in those operating models, to
2 span a wide range of uncertainty. I will go into how that was
3 done for bluefin tuna in the next couple of slides.

4
5 The analogy that I like to use about what we're trying to do is
6 an air conditioner, and I think, in fisheries management, we, as
7 biologists, are exceedingly good at complicating the crap out of
8 things, but, really, what we're trying to do is relatively
9 simple. We are trying to derive a catch limit and manage our
10 fisheries through a fairly blunt-force instrument of a catch
11 limit, and we have a lot of things that are added on to that
12 tactically, but it's similar to an air conditioner thermostat,
13 where we're trying to keep the temperature of our house at a
14 certain desired temperature.

15
16 You want the simplest thermostat possible, and you want the one
17 that has the least amount of feedback needed to get the job
18 done, and, in that situation, I think we're not always looking
19 at our management as could we derive the most simplest tool, and
20 I think, if an alien came down to Earth and said, how, in the
21 past, have we managed this fishery, they would say, okay, what's
22 the minimal amount of information that I need to achieve the
23 desired objective, but the problem is that they would be dealing
24 with humans, and we have an innate capacity for complexity.

25
26 The air conditioner thermostat is the operating model, and, if
27 you want to simulation test it, you would create an environment,
28 including your house, and the management procedure would be the
29 thermostat, and then the operational management objective would
30 be the temperature you set the thermostat at, and, conceptually,
31 we want it to be comfortable. Operationally, we want it to be
32 at a certain temperature all the time, which defines how often
33 your air conditioner turns itself on or off.

34
35 There's a compromise there, because it's going to cost you more
36 to do that, and, at least in my household -- My wife is from New
37 England, and she wants the temperature at seventy, and I'm from
38 warmer climates, and I would want it at eighty, and, through
39 extensive compromise, we land on seventy-two. However, there
40 are other competing operational management objectives that go
41 into that decision-making, as there always are.

42
43 Conceptually, what is the desired goal of the fishery?
44 Operationally, that's turning those into specific codified and
45 measurable objectives, with a timeline and minimum required
46 probabilities. The reason that you need to get down to those
47 details is because we need to simulation test whether you're
48 meeting them, and here is some text on the operational

1 objectives, and I won't read that, but they account for some of
2 the other things that you would have to consider, in terms of
3 the temperature setting for your house.

4
5 The key thing here is that there is a tradeoff, in this case
6 between our house temperature. The colder you set it, the more
7 often your AC cycles on, and the higher your cost, and you've
8 got to find that tradeoff space between the temperature and
9 cost, what you can live with and what you can afford, and it's
10 the same for fisheries.

11
12 I will go into the bluefin tuna management strategy setting
13 evaluation, and, if you paid attention to bluefin, it's one of
14 the most contentious fisheries in the world, and it's also one
15 of the most valuable fisheries in the world. We think there is
16 two, or more, stocks that mix in the Atlantic, and the image is
17 blue are satellite-tagged fish that have been tagged and moved
18 into the Mediterranean, where we think there is a spawning
19 population, and then red are fish that have moved into the Gulf
20 of Mexico, where we think there's another spawning population.
21 There may be other spawning populations, but you can see that
22 there is fairly extensive mixing between the red and the blue.
23 The red population is about ten-times the size of the blue
24 population, based on landings alone.

25
26 You've got this complicated mixing, where there's a mixed-stock
27 fishery, and you've got other issues of time-varying
28 productivity, where we think there's been a regime shift, which
29 is one of the hypotheses, and then there's a number of other
30 biological uncertainties, and those were all put into the
31 operating models, and so those were accounted for, and one of
32 the key things was non-stationarity and the explicit
33 consideration that the environment may change in the future, and
34 how do we develop a management procedure that account for that.

35
36 The stock assessments, unfortunately, having done stock
37 assessments for the past consecutive three years, they were
38 deemed unreliably for management advice. They were deemed
39 unreliable for biomass-based management advice and then,
40 recently, unreliable for management advice, because they did not
41 explicitly account for stock mixing, and so we were left with a
42 rather challenging conundrum, in order to give management
43 advice.

44
45 These are the catches, and you can see that the red is the
46 western population, which is much smaller than the eastern
47 population, if you base it on landings alone. The Mediterranean
48 population, for ten years, during the 1990s and early 2000s, was

1 experiencing extremely high overfishing and catches on the order
2 of 50,000 metric tons. Many of those were unreported and
3 illegal catches that were well beyond the TAC, and so you had a
4 major crisis at about 2010, where bluefin was petitioned for a
5 CITES listing.

6
7 I think one of the key biological issues is that what happens in
8 the east affects the west, because the western fishery is about
9 half eastern fish, and we know this because of genetics, which
10 tell us that the pies are eastern, western, and then
11 unidentified population, and you can see the western fisheries
12 have a substantial component of orange, which is fish that were
13 born in the Mediterranean and caught in the west, and so, if the
14 Mediterranean population is heavily overfished, then that
15 reduces the supply of fish to the western fisheries.

16
17 First, we had to develop what were the conceptual and the
18 operational management objectives, and, conceptually, there were
19 -- I will go into, on the next slide, what they are, and so we
20 just illustrate one management objective, which would be
21 stability, and, conceptually, the fishery wanted stability in
22 the TAC, so that they could know what the TAC was going to be
23 for several years, and they could then say I know we're going to
24 be able to catch this, and I know we can take that to the bank
25 to get loans, and that's one thing that has been used for the
26 goals for that stability, and, also, it allows you to build your
27 market and say you can deliver this to market.

28
29 Operationally, what does that mean? It means that the TAC
30 varies by no less than a certain fraction, like 20 percent in
31 each year.

32
33 There were four operational management objectives for bluefin
34 tuna, and so all of the wants and needs were condensed down into
35 four: safety, status, stability, and yield. Safety and status
36 are the biological must-pays. Magnuson says that you can't
37 overfish and that you must rebuild fisheries, and safety is that
38 you stay away from a very low biomass point, and so that's
39 standard biological must-pays for most fisheries.

40
41 Turning those into operational required putting probabilities on
42 that and then defining those limits, such as the biomass into
43 reference points, and getting those definitions of probabilities
44 took a long time. Filling those numbers in was quite
45 challenging to get to what was, and, fortunately, we were able
46 to get those defined, which allows us to measure where our
47 management procedures are relative to that.

48

1 The next ones were stakeholder-desired objectives of stability,
2 and I mentioned that, and then yield. Obviously, there is a
3 strong desire to get yield, both in the short-term as well as in
4 the long-term.

5
6 The types of management procedures that I will go into right
7 now, mainly because the models were not working particularly
8 well, and particularly were challenged by a number of the
9 biology and non-stationarity, and we were looking at empirical
10 proxies, which are basically index-based management procedures.
11 When the index goes up, the catch goes up. When the index goes
12 down, the catch goes down.

13
14 One of the values, and benefits, of empirical management
15 procedures is they're relatively simple. Anyone can look at the
16 indices and say whether they've gone up or down, and it also
17 means that the only absolute you're using is you're modifying
18 the existing TAC, or catch, and so it grounds you into what was
19 removed last year, or the catch on the books is what gets
20 removed, and it plays to a lot of the strengths of our indices,
21 that they track change over time, but that our models are often
22 not so good at getting absolutes.

23
24 We're, right now, relying on our stock assessment models to tell
25 us exactly how many fish are out there, when we know they're
26 much better at trends and relative status, and so empirical
27 management procedures have some real value in those situations
28 where it's hard to get absolutes, but where we think that the
29 trends are reliable. Then model-based management procedures,
30 which we use our existing stock assessment models and derive our
31 advice in the exact same way that the stock assessment does.

32
33 Originally, there were nine management procedures tested, and
34 there was only one adopted, and this was an evolutionary
35 process, where success mattered, and it was really the
36 performance of those management procedures is what determined
37 whether they stayed in, and ones that failed to meet those
38 management objectives dropped out, and then the ones that met
39 them the best were the ones that remained at the end.

40
41 The management procedure that was adopted was Butterworth
42 Rademeyer, and it's one management procedure that applies to two
43 stocks, in that it is a package deal. When you apply that, then
44 it does half for both the east and the west area. It sets the
45 TAC for three years, based on ten indices, and so it takes an
46 average of ten different fishery-independent and fishery
47 dependent indices, and it has a lot of built-in stability
48 provisions, because the fishery is really concerned about

1 jumping off a ledge to something new, and that's one of the
2 things that MSE can account for, is, well, what are the
3 objectives, and, if the objectives meet the biological must-
4 pays, then it's a perfectly reasonable management procedure.

5
6 What that means is they wanted stability so that they weren't
7 changing the TAC dramatically in the first couple of years of
8 implementation, because they knew we're going to something new,
9 and there is always this concern that something new is going to
10 bring in some sort of surprise, and we wanted to reduce the
11 surprises, and you don't want surprises.

12
13 As long as you're rebuilding, and meeting those must-pays,
14 biologically, then, sure, we could build in a lot of stability,
15 and that's what happens, is the TAC is substantially constrained
16 from moving a lot in the first couple of years, and, again, it
17 meets many of those multiple competing management objectives,
18 and managers can say, okay, this is going to -- It's likely to
19 work, even if the future is highly uncertain, and I think having
20 that certainty is a comforting thing for having to give
21 management advice when there are so many unknowns, and yet
22 management advice must proceed, with whatever is available.

23
24 Again, these are the indices, and I won't go into them too much
25 more, and I can talk about them more, but I will just skip that
26 over right now.

27
28 Then one of the key other elements, from the standpoint of the
29 decision-maker, was to define what the process moving forward
30 was, how does this fit in, when are the checks and balances,
31 when can we get out of it, if it's not working, and so there's
32 something called exceptional circumstances provisions, and those
33 are the get-out-of-your-management procedure clause, and those
34 are when things that are outside of what was tested in the MSE
35 occur, such as when your indices are well above, or well below,
36 values that have ever been seen, or some new scientific
37 information tells you something you had no understanding of when
38 you tested this.

39
40 Those are situations where you can set aside the management
41 procedure and then develop advice in some other way. Those are
42 tested for every year, and then, if that occurs, then the
43 management procedure may be set aside. There is also -- People
44 ask when are stock assessments going to occur, and what is the
45 role of the stock assessment, and, in this case, they're going
46 to be much less frequent.

47
48 They are specified when it's going to occur, and the role of

1 that is actually quite critical, in that management procedure
2 doesn't necessarily tell you whether it's working, and whether
3 you're achieving your goals, and that's where the stock
4 assessment fits in. It can tell you, are we achieving our
5 goals, and is there something you need to account for that you
6 aren't in the next round of management procedure we commission,
7 and so it's not something you set in motion for thirty years and
8 forget about.

9
10 There is a reconsideration as to is there new information we
11 need to include, can we tune the management procedure to be
12 better, and is there new science that needs to get incorporated.

13
14 Fitting MSE into MSA, how does this fit into our existing
15 structure, and I will just caveat this that this is according to
16 me, and there is a lot of discussion that needs to take place,
17 in terms of how this would work, but management procedures
18 haven't been used substantially across the United States, but
19 we're beginning to work on them, and so we're going to have to
20 figure out how to fit this in, and so there are specific roles
21 that each group plays in the process of developing our current
22 advice, and I think they could play the same similar roles for
23 MSE, in terms of stakeholders playing a key role, the fishing
24 community, the environmental community, people who have a stake
25 in the fishery, which is all of us, have a role in advising the
26 operating model structure and the key uncertainties.

27
28 They know what's going on, and they need to be able to say, hey,
29 you need to incorporate this into your operating model, and we
30 already do this in the SEDAR process. Then stakeholders have a
31 key role in the management objectives, and defining them,
32 because it is their management objectives, and the council is
33 implementing the objectives of all of us, and then advising the
34 management procedures, because, quite often, stakeholders know
35 what might work and what would not work, particularly in the
36 face of things like non-stationarity, where they have had to
37 deal with climate change, and how do you manage the fishery when
38 the populations of a fish change?

39
40 There is a key role for what is called a modeling team, which is
41 the core group of quantitative folks who really shepherd the
42 process through and do the modeling. There needs to be a team
43 who is doing that. They construct the operating models, like
44 the stock assessment scientists, they quantify the management
45 objectives, and then they test and refine the management
46 procedures.

47
48 I think there's a key role for the SSC. The SSC should, I

1 think, be involved in adopting the operating models, because
2 that's fundamentally a science role, advise on the management
3 objectives, to ensure that they're going to meet the biological
4 must-pays, which are within the SSC purview, and they advise on
5 whether the management procedures are going to actually achieve
6 that.

7
8 The council has the critical final role in this, in that they're
9 going to advise on operating models, but that's a science
10 decision, and that should be the SSC, and they would adopt the
11 management objectives, because, fundamentally, that is a council
12 prerogative, and then eventually adopt the management procedure,
13 as we adopt framework amendments, where there is the no action
14 alternative, which would be status quo, and then Options 1, 2,
15 3, or 4, which would be Management Procedure 1, 2, 3, or 4, and
16 then, out of the performance, you would get all of the
17 performance, according to the operational management objectives,
18 which would feed into, I think, a lot of the documentation that
19 needs to go into rulemaking.

20
21 Is it meeting ecological, or is it meeting biological, or
22 social, and those could be outputs of the MSE, which would
23 really, I think, streamline the development of that document and
24 all for the consideration of the alternatives that we already
25 normally have to do.

26
27 I have talked about optimal yield as the tradeoff space between
28 different competing objectives, and, in this case, for bluefin
29 tuna, there was a tradeoff between the eastern yield and the
30 western stock status, and that tradeoff plays out to what I
31 noted what happens in the east affects the west, because, if you
32 take all the fish in the east, there is fewer that swim over to
33 the west, which means you're fishing harder on a purely western
34 population, and so there was a fundamental tradeoff that had to
35 occur there, which was a pretty substantial and potential
36 battle, and we wound up finding a compromise space there, where
37 the management objective achieved what was acceptable to
38 multiple different stakeholders, and finding that compromise
39 space was one of the key challenges of actually adopting a
40 management procedure.

41
42 I think that where we fit MSE into MSA is we do have this
43 mandate to do EBFM, and we also are going to be challenged by
44 non-stationarity, and so empirical management procedures may be
45 our way to develop climate-ready management that allows us to
46 deal with the non-stationary environment.

47
48 Again, we also talk about the delay between when management

1 advice goes on the books and the terminal year of a stock
2 assessment, and I think it always frustrates many of us, and,
3 for many of our stocks that are really short-lived, none of them
4 are left by the time management goes into place, or very few of
5 them.

6
7 Empirical management procedures, and I think in the presentation
8 that the executive chair will give about how we can streamline
9 some of the process, might allow for more rapid and responsive
10 management to hit the books, and then I think that we're going
11 to get science that's going to give us a lot of different novel
12 management procedures that could be based on exploitation rate,
13 where you simply modify the ABC based on what your exploitation
14 rate proxy is, and I think we should pay attention to what's
15 going on in the South Atlantic, with gene tagging and genetic-
16 close-kin-mark-recapture for red snapper in the South Atlantic,
17 as potentially setting the stage for that to become a reality.

18
19 One of the background documents is the MSE strategic plan, which
20 was presented by Cassidy Peterson, our MSE expert at the
21 Southeast Center, and she presented this to the South Atlantic
22 SSC, and she'll be talking a lot about this at the upcoming Gulf
23 SSC, and we have three flagship MSEs that we're embarking upon.

24
25 One is on dolphinfish, to derive an empirical management
26 procedure for dolphinfish. There's been extensive stakeholder
27 outreach and participatory modeling to define the conceptual and
28 then the operational management objectives for the dolphinfish
29 fishery. We will use those in the MSE and then evaluate whether
30 an empirical management procedure meets those objectives. The
31 reason that's a flagship one is because adopting an empirical
32 management procedure that's for a stock, and then not even doing
33 a stock assessment, would really change the paradigm, and, for
34 dolphinfish, a full stock assessment would probably be overkill,
35 and, again, by the time you projected it forward, those fish
36 would no longer be with us.

37
38 There's also the issue that a lot of the dynamics for something
39 like dolphinfish happen outside of the control of the South
40 Atlantic Council, and so, really, it's about developing a
41 management procedure that controls what nature and other
42 fisheries give us and then equitably share that and find a way
43 to spread that around to multiple different stakeholders.

44
45 We're also embarking upon a management procedure for Kemp's
46 ridley, to evaluate conservation procedures, and then one for
47 shrimp, and the reason there is because we wanted to develop
48 another empirical management procedure which is index-based, as

1 well as evaluate what are conceptual and operational management
2 objectives for that fishery.

3

4 The steps forward, and I think this is the guidance that we
5 would provide to a decision-making body, is how we're going to
6 allocate resources to MSE, and I think the process would be
7 through the fishery ecosystem initiative, where high-priority
8 items come up, and then those could be allocated towards this
9 gets this an MSE, and different priorities of MSE, and I would
10 say high-priority situations, for the full power of stakeholder
11 MSEs, are for adoption of binding management advice, and, in
12 this case, I would say don't embark upon it unless you think
13 it's going to count. Don't do it just for scoping or for
14 evaluation, but make it count. Make it become the actual rules.

15

16 The reason for this is that tough decisions don't get made
17 unless they have to get made. We all put the hard decision off
18 unless we have to make it. When there is challenging compromise
19 that has to be made, you've got to make that decision count.

20

21 The second is when there's a really difficult policy decision,
22 where you need to find that compromise space, and there are no
23 good answers, but there's one that we can live with.

24

25 When there's heretofore intractable stakeholder conflicts, and
26 you've got to find some way to reconcile those, one of the key
27 ways you can reconcile that is to write down what different
28 groups need and then find out are you coming close to achieving
29 that. Zero-sum games get us nowhere, but, once you can see that
30 there is some space that groups can live with, you might be able
31 to break those intractable conflicts.

32

33 When there are disenfranchised stakeholders, and, in that case,
34 when there are stakeholders that haven't been brought to the
35 table, such that their operational management objectives are not
36 explicitly considered, they need to be brought to the table, the
37 ecosystem being one of them, and then in situations where the
38 scientific uncertainty threatens the integrity of the current
39 management approach, or the status quo management is clearly
40 failing, and one could say that that was the situation with
41 bluefin tuna, in which case we knew it was not working, and it's
42 a known unknown.

43

44 Then, when there's conditions where the future projections are
45 really unclear, the unknown unknowns about what the future
46 environment might bring, how do we manage through that, and I
47 think the climate scenarios might be one of the ways.

48

1 Then other situations where we recommend simpler approaches,
2 like a desk MSE done by an analyst, when an empirical management
3 procedure might just improve upon the status quo management, and
4 the objectives are already clear, but just find a management
5 procedure that works better, and that can be done on the desk,
6 and then to modify a catch control rule, and we often see that
7 management strategy evaluation is recommended to derive a catch
8 or harvest control rule, but, in situations where you already
9 know your objectives, it doesn't usually require the full
10 stakeholder investment.

11
12 For situations where stakeholders want information for an
13 external purpose, and, in that case, there is often situations
14 where there are marked incentives for a management procedure
15 derived through MSE, and particularly the Marine Stewardship
16 Council often provides incentives for management procedures, and
17 fisheries can get that certification much easier if there is an
18 adopted harvest control rule through MSE, and, in that case,
19 those stakeholders can help support and co-fund that, and that
20 would be the recommendation there. Then, a lot of times, there
21 is research and scientific questions that could be answered
22 through a much different route.

23
24 Here are the different flavors. If you were going to say, well,
25 how do we apply what degree of resources to what tool, or what
26 job, and, well, the full stakeholder MSE is the full Monty.
27 That is a lot of stakeholder involvement, a lot of meetings, and
28 it's expensive and time-consuming.

29
30 Intermediate MSE is something in the middle, and a desk MSE is
31 done by an analyst over a computer, and usually it doesn't
32 require stakeholder input, and then not MSE, and there's a vast
33 number of things that are just simulation exercises, that don't
34 have the closed loop simulation, risk analyses, sensitivity
35 runs, and those things can be done much easier, and often don't
36 require full stakeholder support either, and so the key thing is
37 matching the problem to the tool.

38
39 Just a couple of other examples where this is being applied,
40 often, at the tuna RFMOs, they are seeking management
41 procedures, and ICCAT has a number of them ongoing. There's
42 dolphinfish, as I noted, and South Atlantic reef fish has an MSE
43 that is ongoing for its reef fish complex, and Gulf shrimp is
44 something we are working on, as well as Kemps sea turtles, and
45 then the interim assessments that we've been exploring and will
46 continue to refine the interim assessment approach.

47
48 Here is my take-home message, and I won't read it, and that is

1 already evident, and so I will acknowledge many of my ICCAT
2 colleagues, who helped shepherd us through this process and
3 explaining this to their many stakeholders, and the NMFS MSE
4 working group, and then my NMFS colleagues and academic
5 partners, who are actually taking on many of the MSEs that I
6 referred to. With that, I am happy to take questions, and thank
7 you for the opportunity to present this. I hope you see it as
8 something that has a lot of power, but use it wisely. Thank
9 you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you for the presentation, Dr. Walter,
12 and there's certainly a lot to digest in there, but, yes, I
13 certainly view this as a very powerful tool, and my brain is
14 already churning for potential ways that the council can
15 potentially try to bring this forward in certain circumstances,
16 but does anyone on the committee have questions or comments for
17 Dr. Walter? Mr. Gill.

18
19 **MR. BOB GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, John, for
20 an excellent presentation. It certainly brings, at least to me,
21 a lot of clarity, in terms of what's going on in that world, and
22 so, if you look at the first take-home message, that implies, to
23 me, that you've got at least two aspects to it, and one is the
24 biological aspect, and the other is the human aspect and the
25 behavioral reaction to whatever changes are taking place, but
26 the behavioral aspect is an area, in my view, that we have
27 virtually no information, and very little work has been done,
28 and more is ongoing, but integrating that into testing it out
29 and seeing what the results are -- That seems, to me, to be a
30 major hole, and how do you see that part fitting into test
31 running and saying, okay, we've got some results here that
32 should reflect what we expect to happen, and the behavioral
33 reaction to whatever changes we propose?

34
35 **DR. WALTER:** So MSE really -- A lot of the seminal work on MSE
36 was done by an economist, Dan Holland, who actually presented at
37 the workshop in San Diego, but we've not been as explicit with
38 bringing our social scientists back into the process, in terms
39 of trying to get at that implementation uncertainty.

40
41 You can set a catch quota, but then how humans actually -- What
42 they do is rolled into implementation uncertainty, and there's a
43 lot in that, and I think that's something that we are bringing
44 to a number of developments, the SEASAW workshop, and then
45 further add-ons to that, and then bringing our social scientists
46 into identifying what are humans likely to do, and knowing that
47 there's a certain like standard motivations for humans, and I
48 think understanding that, and saying, well, if you set this,

1 there's likely to be this behavior, so that, when we model it,
2 we have a reasonable range of uncertainties as to what would
3 happen.

4
5 I think that's a key missing link, and there's another missing
6 link in terms of incorporating economics into the operational
7 management objectives, and you will see that ICCAT did not have
8 any economics explicitly incorporated. They specifically
9 requested us not to do that, but, at the backend, many of the
10 decisions that were made were implicitly economic-based
11 decisions, and I think that's a missing link, because I think,
12 ultimately, it's going to come down to economics, but maybe it's
13 fine to leave implicit, and people can do that math in their
14 heads, and I think I would prefer for us to be as explicit as
15 possible on that, but that requires quantifying those objectives
16 in economic terms. Thanks.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Dr. Frazer.

19
20 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** I'm glad I had a cup of coffee this morning,
21 John. That was a great talk, and, you know, I'm thinking a
22 little bit about how reliant this management evaluation strategy
23 is on these empirical models, which are essentially proxy
24 methods, and the rationale for that is that you don't have all
25 the resources to conduct, you know, an expensive assessment
26 frequently, right, and so what it does mean is that you have to
27 identify what are the appropriate proxies, and you have to make
28 an investment in data collection efforts, right, that allow you
29 to capture data rapidly, so you could respond quickly, and
30 that's the thought process, and that, to me, sounds a lot like
31 what we've attempted to do here with our interim analysis, to
32 some degree, right, and so one of the things that we've found is
33 that, although they're very well intentioned, the turn-around
34 time on those empirical observations, or those proxies, isn't as
35 fast as perhaps we would like it to be, and so we don't -- We're
36 not able to respond quickly.

37
38 I'm wondering, from your team's perspective, as you move forward
39 in your thinking of, okay, are we going to invest more money in
40 data collection efforts that allow us to have more effective
41 proxies, and reduce the amount of time and effort that we put
42 into assessments, right, and so, right now, it takes about five
43 years, or more, to get a new assessment, and so I'm just trying
44 to figure out, in your mind, how you allocate those limited
45 resources, moving forward, and whether in fact you see fewer
46 stock assessments, right, and a greater investment in these kind
47 of other types of data collection efforts.

48

1 **DR. WALTER:** I will put my Deputy Director hat back on, in terms
2 of -- Because this is something we've been talking about, is how
3 we manage resources, and we proposed what we call a portfolio
4 approach with the SEDAR Steering Committee, where you apply the
5 right tool for the job, and, in some cases, we think that the
6 gold standard for a stock is a full stock assessment, but
7 there's a lot of cases where -- Even the gold standard for
8 bluefin was no longer gold, and I think it fell out of even
9 bronze, and so it may not always be the right tool, and it may
10 be that you can get the annual catch limit advice more
11 frequently, and more rapidly, with some kind of a management
12 procedure and then do stock assessments every six years, rather
13 than try to do it every three years.

14
15 For other species, an empirical management procedure might be
16 the best tool, say for shrimp or dolphinfish, and so, in that
17 portfolio, you have a range of things to apply, and it's not
18 always the gold standard benchmark assessment, and it's the
19 right tool for the job, and the competing factor is resources
20 that we can't apply the gold standard to every stock, and so
21 we've got to scale back on some things, and I think we have to
22 understand that it isn't always that full stock assessment
23 that's the best thing always.

24
25 It might be quite good addressing some of the key science
26 issues, and it might be very good at giving us stock status, but
27 it may not be the best tool for giving us annual catch limits,
28 because it requires, for instance, projections, or assumption,
29 of the stock-recruitment relationships, to project forward, and
30 that projection might be three, four, five years in the future,
31 where -- By the time it hits the books, and so I think what we
32 see as the future is that there's going to be this portfolio of
33 approaches to getting the management advice and that we allocate
34 those resources across that portfolio.

35
36 It's going to mean fewer full stock assessments, just because we
37 can't just give every stock that type of pace and cadence that
38 is necessary.

39
40 **DR. FRAZER:** I appreciate that answer. Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Dr. Stunz.

43
44 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Thank you, John. I think you hit on some
45 answers to the questions that I had, just in that answer to
46 Tom's question, but, one, you know, I think certainly the
47 council would be looking for simplicity or ways to improve the
48 management, and so I really have two questions for you on that,

1 and, obviously, in the design of the simplest thermostat, and
2 you've got that, and I see that you selected some species, like
3 sea turtles and shrimp and such, that may be a good place to
4 start, but then, on the end of the simple thermometer, you've
5 got the red snapper stock assessment, which is anything but
6 simple, and so what I'm wondering -- My question centered around
7 two things, John.

8
9 One, does the Science Center -- You know, do you all have the
10 time, in light of, you know, us needing to manage fisheries
11 around this table, and expertise to do that, obviously, and it
12 sounds like you do, and so that would be one of my questions,
13 and then the next one would be how do we really incorporate it,
14 and I think you kind of touched on it right there, and the
15 process is driven by FMPs and catch streams and how we allocate,
16 and how do these really factor into the decisions that we have
17 to make around this table?

18
19 **DR. WALTER:** How it fits in, in this case, the way I would see
20 it is the framework amendment would specify the recipe, and it
21 would say that the recipe, for instance, is it takes this index
22 and modifies the catch, through this TAC, or ABC, based on the
23 values of this index, and then allocates it according to X, Y,
24 and Z. It fully specifies the recipe for how that gets done.

25
26 Then it would be applied, either once every two years or three
27 years, to set the ABC, and that would go through -- The SSC
28 would say, okay, the recipe was applied according to the
29 specifications in the framework, and it meets the biological
30 must-pays, and everything checks out, and there's nothing
31 exceptional. It goes before the council, and the council says
32 that it looks great, and done.

33
34 How it gets incorporated a little more rapidly into the
35 management advice is I think through some of the discussions
36 that we're going to have about streamlining that, and I think
37 there's an example of how the Regional Administrator can apply
38 the output of -- You know, once it's been specified, you can,
39 Andy, have some leeway to simply apply it, and maybe you can
40 comment on how like a management procedure could more rapidly
41 get on the books, and I think there is a procedure for it, but
42 it's a little bit outside of my expertise, but I think it could
43 be done.

44
45 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I think Carrie will talk some about some
46 efficiencies that we're jointly looking at, right, but the --
47 Kind of taking a step back, one of the challenges with stock
48 assessments has been throughput, right, and the amount of time

1 and effort and energy that has to go into pulling all that data
2 together and running a stock assessment, and so we are certainly
3 interested, as an agency, in looking at approaches that
4 hopefully can provide equally good results, but being more
5 reactive and responsive, obviously, to the needs of the fishery
6 and fisherman.

7
8 You know, there are annual specification processes and other
9 mechanisms where, you know, based on essentially kind of a
10 delegation authority of the Regional Administrator, kind of like
11 accountability measures and other things, you could specify
12 changes to the catch limits, or other management measures, in a
13 much more timely fashion than having to go through a full-blown
14 council amendment and framework action, and so certainly we're
15 interested in exploring those, where that delegation could be
16 appropriate.

17
18 While I have the mic, I did want to, I guess, ask John, and,
19 thinking through the examples, and so we've spent a lot of time,
20 on the South Atlantic Council, talking about South Atlantic reef
21 fish, or snapper grouper, and that MSE is kind of just getting
22 underway. In thinking for the Gulf Council, kind of putting
23 your Gulf Council hat on, do you see opportunity for MSE related
24 to anything from kind of the reef fish multispecies challenges
25 we're facing to shedding light on kind of how we can improve the
26 IFQ program, or even the recreational fisheries initiative
27 that's been proposed, and is there aspects to any one of those
28 that you see, you know, more value, or less value, in an MSE,
29 from the standpoint of the council?

30
31 **DR. WALTER:** From what I've heard, I think the first step to
32 talk about IFQs is identifying what the conceptual and
33 operational management objectives are. If you can't write them
34 down and define them, you can't simulation test anything, and so
35 we get those first, the process of doing that, and then talk
36 about doing an MSE on it.

37
38 On the recreational fishing, or reef fish fishery, I think
39 paying close attention to the South Atlantic process, that
40 they're trying to embark on that to derive -- I think, right
41 now, it's initially trying to derive potential options for
42 managing a multispecies reef fish complex, and I don't know if
43 they will, right now, take it fully to a management procedure,
44 but I certainly see the value in at least having that
45 multispecies framework, so that you can test things across
46 multiple species, because a unit of effort applied to reef fish
47 is going to touch multiple species, and we don't, right now,
48 have a good structure for testing like does this -- Does

1 something that was put in place for red snapper affect red
2 grouper, even though you know that it does, and we don't
3 explicitly test that, and I think that's what that structure is
4 designed to do, and I think there's going to be a presentation
5 at the SSC on a spatial model for reef fish by Dave Chagaris
6 that will probably inform whether that's going to be useful to
7 the MSE, but, again, we've got to get those conceptual and
8 operational management objectives, and then what was the third
9 one?

10

11 **MR. STRELCHECK:** The rec fisheries initiative.

12

13 **DR. WALTER:** The rec fisheries initiative, and probably, from
14 the standpoint of working on chasing optimal yield, or defining
15 optimal yield, because I think that's what we're touching upon,
16 when we talk about how do we achieve the objectives of the
17 recreational fishery, while meeting the objectives of the
18 commercial fishery, and other stakeholders, but we have not
19 really defined that, or begin to explore that space well, and so
20 I think, in that case, that would be where I would say that
21 would be quite useful to embark upon, and maybe one of those
22 fishery ecosystem initiatives is trying to chase down optimal
23 yield. Thank you.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** A follow-up, Dr. Stunz?

26

27 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes, and, Dr. Walter, one just brief follow-up to
28 the second, or the first, part of that question, about the
29 expertise and time you have in your shop to dedicate to this,
30 given all the other things that we put on your --

31

32 **DR. WALTER:** Well, I'm glad we're on the acknowledgement slide,
33 because these take a large group of people, and many external
34 partners. Cassidy is one person, and her role is not to do
35 these, and her role is to catalyze these and to hope that she
36 can help set these things in motion, and other partners to take
37 on different aspects, and there's no way -- If you read our
38 strategic plan, it's exceedingly ambitious, and there's no way
39 we'll get it all done, but we're going to need partners from
40 numerous areas to do these things, and NC State University is a
41 strong partner on the dolphinfish one, for instance, and so we
42 don't have the resources to do them.

43

44 One of the things you'll hear from our staff is that they want
45 time for research, and I think that that's often seen as, well,
46 why do they need time for research, but, really, what we're
47 saying is they need time to develop the methodologies to improve
48 how we give advice.

1
2 They all know that there are so many things that they would like
3 to improve upon their assessments that they do, and it's that
4 time to be able to fix the problems they know, and that's why,
5 when we saw we want time for research, it's really for that,
6 and, in this case, the research to test the management procedure
7 is one of the things that staff have asked for time for.
8 Thanks.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. I've got Ms. Boggs and Mr. Anson.

11
12 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Just a quick question. Thank you for the
13 presentation. I really enjoyed it, but is MSE something -- You
14 touched on it with the bluefin, that we're seeing some issues
15 with -- I saw we're seeing issues, and we really don't know what
16 we're seeing with king mackerel and cobia and the likes of those
17 fish, something that might have to deal with climate change, and
18 is this something that we could look at for those types of
19 species, that we're uncertain of?

20
21 **DR. WALTER:** Right, and that's the unknown unknowns, what is the
22 future going to hold, and our stock assessments assume that the
23 future is going to be like the past, and, if it turns out that
24 it's going to change, then presumably our benchmarks are going
25 to change, and we might need to consider are we managed to
26 something that is different than the past, and, in those cases,
27 where you've got a rapid change, the one thing that we can
28 control, as humans, is the amount of fishing mortality that we
29 exert, and we can't control, necessarily, the past, and we may
30 not control the changes in the future, and so that -- That was
31 one of the things in bluefin, was we want to be able to test
32 whether it happens or not, and there was a tremendous debate
33 about whether these regime shifts were going to occur.

34
35 What we were trying to say is we're not saying that the regime
36 shifts are going to occur, but it's that we've got a management
37 procedure that can manage if they occur, which is the key thing
38 that getting over that hurdle of people saying this is going to
39 occur, that the productivity is going to get cut in half, and
40 you guys are crazy, and that's not going to happen, and, no,
41 that's not the point at all.

42
43 It's that you want to know if the management that you put into
44 place is going to be able to handle that, and so, in that case,
45 we think there's likely to be changes in the productivity of
46 these species, and we want to test is management going to handle
47 that, and, yes, that would be a role for that.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Anson.

2
3 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you, Dr. Walter, for the presentation,
4 and thank you to you and your staff and others that put thought
5 into this, in trying to address the challenges that you all
6 face, that we face here at the council, with trying to deal with
7 lots of data in a rapidly-changing environment. I just want to,
8 I guess, echo a couple of the other comments, or at least
9 discussion, that was had in the question-and-answer, is that,
10 you know, I'm a little concerned, I guess, to the workload issue
11 still, and this is still -- Although you might be dropping some
12 assessments, or the schedule of assessments, this is still a
13 data-intensive, and resource-intensive, process, and I would
14 just, you know, be curious, maybe, if the next presentation will
15 shed some light in that, but that's just a concern I have.

16
17 Relative to what Mr. Gill had brought up, in your discussion
18 regarding optimum yield, you know, I think that is something
19 that there's some opportunity there that an MSE would be very
20 applicable, in relation to Andy's question just now to you
21 regarding reef fish, you know, particularly in the recreational
22 sector, and so I just -- That, I don't think we're quite there
23 to help us, or have that data populated to fully assess those
24 needs, or wants, from the recreational sector, and so I just --
25 You know, in my mind, I think we'll need additional data, on the
26 socioeconomic aspect, in order for us to really fully benefit
27 from an MSE-type analysis, as we go forward, and it's just a
28 general comment, but thank you.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. We've had a fair amount of discussion
31 on this, and I think this was a very nice presentation, Dr.
32 Walter, and I appreciate it. There's a lot for us to chew on,
33 certainly, but maybe I will try to move ourselves on to the next
34 agenda item, unless there is any additional comments here for
35 Dr. Walter. General Spraggins, go ahead.

36
37 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** I would just like to say that, Dr.
38 Walter, I heard the briefing out in San Diego, and it got my
39 attention then, and it's getting my attention still, and there
40 is something going on, and, you know, when they talked about in
41 San Diego, they talked about also the idea of the lobster moving
42 south from Maine, and there's some reason for it, and there's
43 some reason, and it may even be -- A statement was made that
44 Virginia may be the lobster capital of the world soon, if we
45 don't watch out what's going on, but there's some things going
46 on out there, and it's just like what we see every day with the
47 Mississippi River and everything else, and there's something
48 happening, and we need to put a lot of attention to it, and I

1 appreciate your efforts.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. I am going to move us on to the next
4 item here, and this is Tab E, Number 5, Overview of Potential
5 Options for Regulatory Streamlining, and I will hand it over to
6 you, Dr. Simmons.

7

8

OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR REGULATORY STREAMLINING

9

10 **DR. DIAGNE:** For this item here, council staff, in this case Dr.
11 Simmons, will present a paper, a draft paper, on potential
12 options for regulatory streamlining. Amongst the things that
13 will be discussed is this document will provide examples of
14 framework actions developed by the Gulf Council that may be
15 utilized in the future for automating catch advice from stock
16 assessments, or interim analyses, approved by the council's SSC.
17 The committee should ask questions and provide feedback for
18 future development, as warranted. Dr. Simmons.

19

20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** All right. Thank you, Mr.
21 Chair. Good morning, everyone. This is a draft white paper,
22 and it was put together by a small group of staff at our office,
23 and at the Regional Office, and so it is in quite draft form
24 right now, and I apologize, and I didn't get a presentation
25 together, and so I'm going to walk through the document.

26

27 I just want to highlight some stuff here, and there are various
28 factors and, you know, statutory requirements that must be
29 considered by our council, and all the regional management
30 councils, as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service, when
31 determining the type of fishery management plan, or amendment to
32 those plans, that has to be necessary for the development and
33 recommendation of those regulatory changes.

34

35 Many councils, including the Gulf Council, have established
36 frameworks within our various fishery management plans, Reef
37 Fish, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, the Shrimp FMP, to more
38 quickly enact identified regulatory changes, and these are often
39 called open, or standard, framework processes, and some councils
40 have also established an abbreviated procedure for identifying
41 regulatory changes that are considered routine, or
42 insignificant, and those are often called the closed framework
43 process, and there's a little figure in there, a diagram, that
44 we put together some years ago that you can take a look at.

45

46 Everyone knows this, but I will go ahead and state the obvious.
47 The council process is an open and transparent process.
48 However, we always have tradeoffs between transparency,

1 efficiency, and throughput that we have to consider at this
2 table, and there are especially true as managers search for
3 tools and processes that can be used to integrate new science
4 for management decisions, and these are important considerations
5 when evaluating the regulatory efficiencies that you may want to
6 consider moving forward.

7
8 The first thing we did is we said, hey, we need to see where we
9 are now, and how long are things taking right now, and so what
10 we did is we took a history of recent regulatory actions that
11 were completed in the last five years, and we used 2017 to 2021
12 to identify and evaluate potential regulatory efficiencies, and
13 so we only used the actions that were initiated by the Gulf
14 Council, and I think some of these are joint, to the time the
15 rules became effective for consideration, and we needed to look
16 at if there were trends in the timing of those, based on the
17 type, based on the Magnuson and the National Environmental
18 Policy Act requirements, those two main laws.

19
20 I think everyone has seen this Figure 1, and this kind of shows
21 an oversimplified process of the frameworks versus our
22 traditional management process, and then, more recently, we've
23 had emergency and interim rules that we've utilized.

24
25 Figure 2 shows the five years of the recent regulatory history
26 for the Gulf Council actions, and I apologize, and it's a little
27 bit busy, but hopefully you can blow that up on your screen, and
28 that was the best way we knew how to provide that in an
29 infographic at this time, but, during that time, during those
30 five years, the following type and number of documents were
31 developed and implemented by the council and NMFS.

32
33 We did three full plan amendments that required an environmental
34 impact statement, thirteen plan amendments that required an
35 environmental assessment, fourteen framework actions that
36 required an environmental assessment, and two abbreviated
37 framework actions that were supported by what we're calling
38 categorical exclusions, and, again, the council timing was
39 defined as the first day of initiation, via a motion at the
40 council table, until the document was transmitted to NMFS, and
41 so that ended the council's time, and then when the Southeast
42 Regional Office received that to the time that it became
43 effective, the rules became effective, and so that's how that
44 was defined there. The council is the darker color, and the
45 agency, NMFS, is the lighter blue.

46
47 Currently, the framework actions with environmental assessments,
48 the standard open frameworks, take the least number of days.

1 That's to be expected. Plan amendments, both the environmental
2 assessments and the environmental impact statements, take the
3 longest for the Gulf Council and the agency, and that is to be
4 expected, because those documents typically analyze more
5 difficult and more controversial actions, such as sector
6 allocations, permits, reporting requirements, ending
7 overfishing, and establishing or modifying rebuilding plans.

8
9 Let's go down to the need, on page 4, and so managers need
10 additional tools to rapidly respond to changing environmental
11 factors, and we've already talked about this this morning, and
12 fishing behavior, social and economic interactions, and
13 indicators, and the Science Center recently provided a new tool,
14 which I don't know if it's really new anymore, but we've
15 operationalized a couple of the interim analyses from different
16 stocks, through the SSC process and council process, to make
17 changes to catch advice, and also health checks.

18
19 During that process, it was determined that the council can't do
20 these every year. We can't make management changes every year.
21 It takes us too long, and so how can we best utilize this tool
22 that we have, to react in between full-blown stock assessments,
23 using this tool, potentially?

24
25 During the August council meeting, we provided a brief
26 presentation, and then you asked me, via a motion, to follow-up
27 with this, and staff, and so the aim of this document is to
28 consider developing an automated process that would reduce the
29 time between the SSC providing catch level recommendations, and
30 updated via regulatory document, while minimizing any losses in
31 transparency and opportunity for stakeholder input during that
32 process.

33
34 What we did is we looked at -- We got a document from
35 Headquarters, from Kelly Denit, that looked at what the other
36 regional councils were doing, and it was interesting, because
37 some of the things they were doing were kind of just named
38 differently, but they weren't really all that different, and so
39 we had to first work through that, and I think Mara and Peter
40 helped me get straight on that, but that was interesting, and so
41 what we tried to identify were the framework types, and the
42 three that we identified were the annual, or multi-annual,
43 specifications or other procedures, and there's an example in
44 there of where we have applied that, and it was developed in a
45 full Reef FMP that required an environmental impact statement,
46 and that was done in Amendment 50, and that process, once it was
47 implemented, allowed the states to request a closure of areas in
48 federal waters, and so that's one example where we've applied

1 that particular framework process in the Gulf.

2
3 I think you also asked us to try to look at the anticipated
4 amount of time it might take to develop and complete the
5 framework process and then what the savings would be once that's
6 implemented on the automated side of it, and so these are
7 estimates, and I certainly think they probably need some
8 refinement, but the anticipated amount of time it takes to
9 develop and complete a framework process is anticipated to be
10 ten to twenty-four months to develop the full plan amendment,
11 without associated EIS or EA, and then, after the amendment is
12 implemented, the time savings could be as quick as sixty to
13 ninety days, or up to ninety days or more, if there's more
14 involvement at the council level.

15
16 After implementation, this time savings could be as quick as
17 sixty days, and, again, these are estimates, and so, if you look
18 at the second process, the non-discretionary or automatic
19 management responses to specified triggers and fishery re-
20 openings, there's another example in the Gulf Reef Fish FMP
21 where we have established a framework that allows the Regional
22 Administrator to conduct the following actions, and that's
23 closing or adjusting harvest for any sector, reopening a sector,
24 and implementing accountability measures.

25
26 That process, to get through it, it was still the same to
27 develop an EA or EIS, and it's probably ten to twenty-four
28 months, depending on the scope, but then the efficiency, we
29 thought here, could be much greater, after that's implemented,
30 if new information fell within -- If it was consistent with what
31 had been analyzed in that full plan amendment, or amendment, to
32 the fishery management plan, or amendment to that plan. The
33 estimated time to implement these types of actions was one to
34 ten days, after it was fully effective.

35
36 The next steps, to think about this a little further, would be
37 to potentially develop a Reef Fish FMP that would include a
38 framework for establishing catch advice, for a limited number of
39 species that we have successfully demonstrated interim analysis
40 with, with proposed catch advice that's vetted by the Science
41 Center and reviewed and approved by the Gulf Council's SSC, and,
42 for example, I think we've had this for red grouper, gray
43 triggerfish, and red snapper was a little additional, but also
44 an interim approach, and potentially gag, here in the near
45 future. It's also possible that this may be accomplished for
46 vermilion snapper, and potentially king mackerel in the future,
47 but that's -- I think some more work has to be done there.

48

1 The document, and this is the tricky part, would need to analyze
2 a range of catches, with most likely the same sector allocations
3 that are on the books for each of those species, and we would
4 have to work hand-in-hand with the Science Center, and our staff
5 and the Regional Office, to make sure that the range could be --
6 The foresight to know that the range that would need to be
7 analyzed for those species would be scientifically robust and
8 within what may be an output from the interim assessment, and so
9 we would have to work in close coordination with them to fully
10 develop and operationalize that effort.

11
12 For simplicity, it's probably best that we don't consider
13 changes in stock status and sector allocations, and so Figure 4
14 outlines an anticipated proposed process, if the council moves
15 forward with this effort, and the italicized text is a potential
16 example of how the current Reef Fish FMP and framework procedure
17 could be modified to implement such a closed framework process,
18 and that's there in the italicized text, and then the potential
19 -- There's an infographic with the potential steps, if this were
20 to be fully operationalized.

21
22 Again, this is in quite draft form, and I did want to get
23 something down on paper for us to consider, moving us forward,
24 and I think it is important, and I think there are some species
25 that we could potentially do this for, and, in the future, if
26 you look at the most recent interim analysis that we received on
27 red grouper, I think, you know, if we had this process in place,
28 we could easily have changed that catch advice, perhaps,
29 500,000, or 600,000, pounds up, potentially, if this was on the
30 books, if the SSC and council felt that was appropriate. I will
31 stop there, and that's currently where we are.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you for the presentation, Dr. Simmons,
34 and to all the staff that put that together. This was
35 informative to me. Any questions or comments for Dr. Simmons?
36 Mara and then Andy.

37
38 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Not really a question, but just so I don't know
39 -- I just want to clarify the maybe possible timelines for this,
40 and so the one to ten days, in terms of implementing something,
41 the reason that that works, and that that happens, is because
42 those things are temporary rules, right, and so there's no
43 public comment period, and they don't change the Code of Federal
44 Regulations. We're adjusting a catch limit for a very short
45 period of time, like a payback, or we're closing for a
46 particular fishing year, and so that's why that one to ten days
47 is there.

48

1 The way that the council's catch limits are structured is that
2 they're codified, and so we have numbers in the Code of Federal
3 Regulations that say what the catch limits are. We could not
4 change those through a temporary rule, right, and so we would
5 have to do proposed and final rulemaking to do that, and so this
6 type of thing is never going to happen in one to ten days,
7 unless we change the whole structure of the regulatory scheme
8 that this council is operating under.

9
10 It would be more likely kind of like the flow in this diagram, a
11 little bit different, and you could streamline the council
12 process, right, and so you could streamline new scientific
13 information goes to the SSC, the SSC comes up with a
14 recommendation within the scope of what we've analyzed, the
15 council takes a look at it, yes we agree, and letter to the
16 agency, and then the agency evaluates it, and, if it's covered
17 under the analysis and all of that, does the rulemaking, but the
18 rulemaking would still have to happen, and so I guess I just
19 wanted to make that clear, that the rulemaking on the backside
20 is what would probably take the time, but you wouldn't have to
21 go through that multiple-council-meeting process and that sort
22 of thing.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Andy.

25
26 **MR. STRELCHECK:** First, thank you, Carrie, for your leadership
27 and the work of my team and your team to put this together. I
28 think anything we can do to increase efficiency, reduce process,
29 will be beneficial. A couple of comments though. In terms of
30 the graphics, they're really enlightening, and I really
31 appreciate you kind of looking at all of the actions that have
32 gone through the council process over the last number of years.

33
34 You know, one of the conversations that Carrie and I have been
35 having is about timing of some of our rulemaking, and the
36 agency, once we receive an action from the council, we have to
37 make some decisions about how we prioritize the work that's
38 coming into us, and, ultimately, at the end of the day, we're
39 trying to prioritize things that have specific mandates, and,
40 obviously, lower on the priority list are things that we can
41 take a little more time with, because they're less urgent, but
42 Carrie and I have kind of agreed that we need to have just a
43 more regular conversation, because there might be things higher
44 on the council's priority list than we're deeming them, and we
45 need to identify that.

46
47 I just wanted to make note of that, and the other comment I
48 would made is I'm certainly supportive of moving forward with an

1 FMP to incorporate this proposal. I think it could even be
2 broadened, right, and so I kind of think about what we've done
3 with state delegation for red snapper management, in terms of
4 size limits and bag limits and other management options, right,
5 and so the question really would become as to what range of
6 management measures, alternatives, would you want to consider at
7 that point, beyond just annual catch limit specifications, if
8 any, and what would that process look like, in terms of council
9 involvement, ultimately then moving that forward to the agency.

10
11 I do want to kind of keep it open-ended that, if we proceed
12 forward with a management plan modification, that we think even
13 more broadly than just some annual catch limit specifications.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Dr. Frazer.

16
17 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to circle back
18 on the comments that Mara made with regard to the one to ten
19 days. Yesterday, when we were having the discussion in the Reef
20 Fish Committee about how long it might take to, you know,
21 implement a closure, for example, for gag, and Andy indicated
22 that it would probably take ten days, I guess I'm trying to
23 figure out what's -- What type of things you can do in one day,
24 as opposed to -- Why ten days, right, and do you know what I'm
25 saying? That's why I was asking, and it's very misleading to
26 me, I'm just saying.

27
28 **MS. LEVY:** I mean, there are certainly things that, if needed, I
29 think the agency could push, I mean, to get through the process,
30 but you still have the process, right, and it's got to go
31 through the agency's clearance process, and it's got to get to
32 the Federal Register, you know, and it has to be accepted by the
33 Federal Register, and so anything happening in one day -- I
34 mean, I don't know. I have seen things happen fairly quickly,
35 in a couple of days, but Andy could probably speak more to that.

36
37 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, what immediately comes to mind is
38 following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, right, and we were
39 essentially modifying the closures on a daily basis, in terms of
40 where the oil was moving to, right, and so I don't recall
41 exactly what that process entailed, but, ultimately, that was
42 probably the most responsive that we could be, and I would say
43 seven to ten days is probably more realistic, for most of the
44 actions we're talking about here.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Any other questions or comments? Dr.
47 Simmons, are you looking for specific direction here to move
48 this forward?

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** No, and I just -- I think the plan
3 would be for us to start an amendment to look at this, unless
4 the council tells us otherwise, because we're going to have to
5 start involving a lot more staff.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** What says the committee? Okay. Yes, I
8 certainly -- Andy, go ahead.
9
10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So is that direction to staff then to start an
11 amendment to -- We don't need a motion, or do you want a motion,
12 Carrie?
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I guess a motion would be the best.
15 I was looking back at what we had before, and I apologize.
16
17 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** All right. Anyone on the committee willing
18 to offer up a motion to move this forward or anything? Mr.
19 Anson.
20
21 **MR. ANSON:** I guess I will take a stab at it. **To direct staff**
22 **to begin development of a plan amendment to -- In the Reef Fish**
23 **FMP to investigate regulatory streamlining procedures.**
24
25 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. We've got a motion on the table.
26
27 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Second.
28
29 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** And a second. It's seconded by General
30 Spraggins. Okay, and so I will read this into the record. **To**
31 **direct staff to begin development of a plan amendment within the**
32 **Reef Fish FMP to investigate regulatory streamlining procedures.**
33 Susan.
34
35 **MS. BOGGS:** "Investigate" doesn't really -- I mean, that's like
36 we're exploring what we're going to do, and so I think -- I
37 mean, if I may, to direct staff to begin developing a Reef Fish
38 FMP plan amendment. I mean, take it out of the proposed next
39 steps that Carrie has written here, that first sentence, and
40 would that help, Carrie? Developing a Reef Fish FMP plan
41 amendment that includes a framework for establishing catch
42 advice for a limited number of species that have a successful IA
43 with proposed catch advice vetted by the Southeast Fisheries
44 Science Center and reviewed and approved by the Gulf Council's
45 SSC.
46
47 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** So I will --
48

1 **MS. BOGGS:** It's the first sentence of the proposed next steps,
2 and I think that gives you clear direction, Carrie.
3

4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, and I don't think it
5 necessarily has to be that long, and I think we should start
6 with Reef Fish, and, if we think it's possible for CMP, we could
7 -- Then we can bring that back, if we have that flexibility, but
8 I would like us to try to focus a little bit, as we work through
9 this and try to get that fleshed out some more. Direct staff to
10 begin development on a plan amendment --
11

12 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** While staff is getting that up there, I
13 think that Dr. Frazer has a question for Andy.
14

15 **DR. FRAZER:** Andy, in the comments that you made earlier, you
16 thought that there was an opportunity, or a potential, moving
17 forward, to broaden this out a little bit and give perhaps some
18 broader utility, and is this going to limit that, the way that
19 this is written?
20

21 **MR. STRELCHECK:** That's my concern, and why we were just having
22 a discussion here, and, obviously, with my suggestion, we have
23 to have a lot of specificity, in terms of what the triggers are
24 and what the range of alternatives would be that would be
25 provided, and so I would rather keep it more generalized,
26 recognizing that we kind of already worked out at least a path
27 for modifying catch limits, and see what other options could be
28 on the table for other management measures, and, if that doesn't
29 work, well, we just don't include it at that point.
30

31 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Anson.
32

33 **MR. ANSON:** I was just going to suggest that, to try to keep it
34 as simple as possible, similar to what Andy was saying, but just
35 that's my motion.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay, and so we've got a motion on the
38 table, and the seconder is okay? Thank you, General Spraggins.
39 Okay, and so we'll do hands raised here. **All those in favor of**
40 **the motion to direct staff to begin development on a plan**
41 **amendment within the Reef Fish FMP to streamline regulatory**
42 **procedures.** Okay. **The motion passes.**
43

44 **MR. GILL:** Hold on. You didn't get --
45

46 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Sorry. **Any opposed.** Okay. **The motion**
47 **carries unanimously.** Okay. Good, Carrie?
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. I think we can move on to the next
4 agenda item, and I will pass it over to Dr. Diagne again.

5
6 **FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR THE INCLUSION OF SPECIES IN FEDERAL**
7 **MANAGEMENT**
8

9 **DR. DIAGNE:** For our next item, staff will give a presentation
10 on factors to consider for including species in federal
11 management, and, during the discussion, tripletail and African
12 pompano are going to be used as examples to support the
13 committee's discussion, and, finally, the presentation will
14 include potential steps that could be considered while
15 evaluating whether a species could be, or should be, included in
16 federal management or not. The committee should review the
17 information presented and, as needed, recommend the next steps
18 at the end of this. In terms of council staff to give the
19 presentation, I guess that would be me, and so I will just wait
20 for Bernie to put the presentation up. All right. Thank you.

21
22 As we know, the MSA requires that a council prepare an FMP for
23 each fishery under its authority and in need of conservation and
24 management. What we are talking about today, mostly, is, if we
25 look at the National Standard Guidelines, they advise that
26 stocks that are predominantly harvested in federal waters, and
27 that are overfished or subject to overfishing, or likely to
28 become overfished or subject to overfishing, those stocks would
29 require conservation and management, but, in addition, councils
30 may determine that other stocks require conservation and
31 management.

32
33 What follows is a list of essentially ten criteria that are
34 highlighted and that could be considered while making that
35 decision or evaluating whether federal management is needed or
36 not, and those factors are listed here, some of them as
37 questions, and the first one would be is the species an
38 important component of the marine environment or whether the
39 species is caught, actually, or is a target of a particular
40 fishery. Another question would be whether an FMP would
41 improve, or maintain, the condition of the species in question.

42
43 The next factor, listed here, looks at the importance of the
44 species to a user group, the commercial, recreational, or
45 subsistence users. The importance of the species to the nation,
46 or to a regional economy, is also a factor for consideration.

47
48 Another factor to consider would be whether an FMP would further

1 conflict resolution amongst user groups or competing interests,
2 and, also, would an FMP promote an efficient utilization of the
3 resource? The next factor, listed here, is would an FMP address
4 the needs of a developing fishery and promote an orderly growth
5 of that fishery.

6
7 The last point, listed here, is the extent to which a fishery is
8 already properly, or adequately, managed by states, or by joint
9 state and federal programs, or by federal regulations, pursuant
10 to other FMPs or international commissions or by industry self-
11 regulations, consistent with the requirements of the MSA and
12 other applicable law. These are the list of factors to be
13 considered.

14
15 The council should also consider the specific circumstances of
16 the fishery in question and base its evaluation on the best
17 scientific information available to determine whether there are
18 biological, economic, social, and/or operational concerns that
19 can, or should, be addressed by federal management.

20
21 One or more of the factors that we briefly discussed, and any
22 other additional considerations that may be relevant to a
23 particular species, may provide the basis for determining that a
24 stock requires conservation and management.

25
26 Now that we briefly have looked at the factors to consider, we
27 are going to start with the tripletail regulations, and then
28 quickly review the landings, and then we'll do the same for
29 African pompano, before finishing with some steps that could be
30 considered.

31
32 For tripletail, we started with Florida regulations, and the
33 size limit is eighteen inches, and then you have the bag limits,
34 two fish per person, and I will also highlight here the
35 commercial bag limit, which is ten tripletail per day. For the
36 remaining Gulf states, in terms of size limits, all the other
37 states do have an eighteen-inch minimum size limit, and Texas
38 has a seventeen-inch size limit. In terms of possession limits,
39 it would be three per person for Alabama, Mississippi, and
40 Texas, and, in Louisiana, the possession limit is five fish per
41 person.

42
43 Looking at the landings, essentially, tripletail landings are
44 predominantly recreational, and the recreational sector
45 accounts, on average, for more than 97 percent of the landings.
46 If we look at the distribution of landings between state and
47 federal waters, and concentrating on the recreational landings,
48 a small portion of the landings would be in federal waters, and,

1 looking at the data series here between 2000 and 2021, and
2 that's the data series that we have, on average, landings in
3 federal waters account for about 18 percent of the total.

4
5 The distribution of landings by state, as expected here, most of
6 the landings come from the State of Florida, west Florida, and
7 we do have, for the time series that we have here, 60 percent of
8 the landings in west Florida, and the second is Alabama, about
9 20 percent, and Mississippi and Louisiana account roughly for 10
10 percent. I mean, the landings in Texas are less than a percent,
11 and so, depending on how we round this, we go with 10 percent in
12 Mississippi and Louisiana.

13
14 In terms of the landings by mode in the recreational sector,
15 private anglers harvest 91 percent, roughly, let's say more than
16 90 percent, of tripletail, and so that's it for tripletail, in
17 terms of the landings that we have, and now we'll switch to
18 African pompano.

19
20 As far as the regulations are concerned, in the State of
21 Florida, the minimum size limit is twenty-four inches fork
22 length. The bag limit is two per harvester, and there is also a
23 vessel limit of two per vessel.

24
25 In terms of the landings by sector, the recreational sector
26 accounts for about 94 percent, on average, for the time series
27 that we looked at of the landings, and, here, I would point out
28 that there is this huge spike, I guess, in 2007, and, I mean,
29 that's probably an anomaly of some sort, but we are going to
30 figure it out, if we were to continue working on this.

31
32 In terms of landings between state and federal waters, for
33 African pompano, most of the landings would come from federal
34 waters. For the time series that we looked at, about let's say
35 55 percent of the landings, and landed in state waters would be
36 45 percent. In terms of landings by state, the State of Florida
37 accounts for most of the landings, about 58 percent, for the
38 time series that we looked at. Next is the State of Alabama,
39 with about 35, or 36, percent, and then third would be
40 Mississippi, with 5 percent.

41
42 Looking at the landings by mode, the private anglers would land
43 most of the African pompano, and, for this time series, it's
44 about -- It's close to 60 percent, 58 percent or so, and the
45 remainder is between the charter and the shore mode.

46
47 This is the last slide on the presentation, and it just begins
48 to, perhaps, suggest some of the steps to be considered during

1 this process. The first point that I would like to make is that
2 we haven't found any formal process for other regional fisheries
3 management councils when it comes to evaluating whether a
4 species should or shouldn't be included in federal management,
5 and so, essentially, these decisions are made following the
6 regular deliberative council process, if you would.

7
8 In our process here, essentially the council typically approves
9 a motion to initiate the discussion/evaluation of issues like
10 this, or other issues, for that matter, and some of the steps
11 include issues that we need to consider, or could be considered
12 rather, and one would be to gather and synthesize data from the
13 Gulf states and look at where the majority of landings comes
14 from and, also, look at which states do manage the species in
15 question.

16
17 The next point here would be to pay special attention to the
18 coordination with states where most of the landings occurs. For
19 example, in the two species that we looked at, the majority of
20 landings would come from the State of Florida, and so the
21 coordination with that state would be then, I guess, a key step
22 here in the process.

23
24 During this evaluation, it would be, I guess, useful to ask the
25 states about stock status and any other relevant information
26 they may have relative to the species under consideration, and,
27 should there be any recommendations available from SERO, or the
28 Science Center, those also would need to be evaluated and
29 contribute to the process.

30
31 The final point here of this slide, and of the presentation,
32 would ask the question of whether or not there is actually a
33 need to create a formal process to consider the inclusion of
34 species in federal management, and that is, I guess, an open
35 question for the committee, and later on the council, and I
36 believe this is my last slide, and I will stop here and try to
37 answer questions, if there are any. Thank you.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Dr. Diagne. Any questions from
40 the committee? Ms. Boggs.

41
42 **MS. BOGGS:** I have lots of questions, and so this brings us back
43 to a couple of meetings ago, with tripletail and African
44 pompano, and I am going to start with your last slide, Dr.
45 Diagne. Not being a formal process, which that's kind of, I
46 think, where this discussion has stemmed from, then your very
47 last thing is do we need to create a formal process, but, to me,
48 your middle section there, about the council passing the motion

1 to discuss and evaluate, I think that's ultimately where it
2 starts.

3
4 Now, there may be a different process to determine if it needs
5 to become a federal management plan, but that comes back to the
6 discussion with the African pompano. When I brought it up, all
7 I was asking is can we take a look at it, and I got shot down,
8 and we had a petition, and I didn't know, at the time, that the
9 petition had over, I think, 500 or 600 signatures on it, and
10 that's what I was told, is the reason that I didn't get support
11 is because I couldn't tell you how many signatures were on the
12 petition, but then you --

13
14 I'm sorry that Dr. Shipp is not here to defend himself, but Dr.
15 Shipp, a single individual, says we need to look at tripletail,
16 and the council passes it, and so I don't know if this is the
17 right place to do this or not, but, if we need to start a
18 process, and I'm looking to staff, and make a motion to
19 formalize this, I will be happy to try to craft that motion, or,
20 if we can just back up, based on this council passage of a
21 motion to initiate the discussion, that I would come back and
22 talk about probably making a motion to take tripletail off the
23 table, because it's obvious that it's a state fishery, and I
24 would make another motion to look at African pompano, because
25 it's obvious it's a federally-mostly-caught species, but I don't
26 know what to do here.

27
28 I don't know what direction you want, because there's a lot of
29 things going on in this document, and I will be happy to start
30 wherever you want, and I will be happy to put, tomorrow, or this
31 afternoon, when we go to Full Council, put it at the Other
32 Business, but I am looking to the chair of this committee, and
33 the chair of the council, and what should I do here, because
34 there's a lot going on in this document.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. I will first ask Dr.
37 Diagne exactly what he's looking for here, and so there are a
38 couple of things in here. You know, the council passes a
39 motion, as Susan said, and I think that is a decent first step
40 there, but is that consistent with developing a formal process,
41 or policy, to consider inclusion within this?

42
43 **DR. DIAGNE:** Yes, I believe that would be consistent with, I
44 guess, the last bullet, or the last question, but, yes, I mean,
45 at the core, this could be simply limited to what you just
46 mentioned, essentially, the council approves a motion to
47 initiate discussion, or evaluation, and, following that motion,
48 whatever outcome, you know, we get from the council's

1 discussions would essentially tell us how we should proceed, and
2 meaning that this could be handled, really, within your usual
3 deliberative process.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Dr. Diagne, and so that kind of
6 seems like the process that we currently have right now, which
7 is why I think this discussion of developing a formal process
8 here was brought up in the first place, and so I'm not sure how
9 that changes it from where we're currently at. Ms. Boggs.

10
11 **MS. BOGGS:** It may not. I mean, it changes it in the fact that
12 can we, as a council, take this information with tripletail, now
13 that we have it, and move forward with actions on tripletail,
14 and, okay, pompano, African pompano, yes, that motion failed,
15 and so I can't proceed with that, unless I can find someone to
16 bring it back up, and I get that, if I'm correct, but is this
17 the appropriate place to have a discussion about now tripletail,
18 or are we developing a paper, because, I mean, you've given us
19 information here about the tripletail, and so where are we now,
20 and I guess I should ask the question, but where are we now on
21 tripletail?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Dr. Diagne.

24
25 **DR. DIAGNE:** Yes, actually, and, I mean, I guess, today, we
26 would consider this as, if you would, a first step, and we used
27 those two species, the landings, et cetera, regulations, as
28 examples to support the discussion, but, to the extent that,
29 let's say, for example, hypothetically, the council wanted to
30 say that we don't want to manage tripletail, and we would like
31 to consider, for example, managing African pompano, then perhaps
32 we could go back to that motion, and that motion could say to
33 ask us to please evaluate whether tripletail would be a
34 suitable, quote, unquote, candidate for federal management or
35 not, separate, and the same question for African pompano, so
36 that, at the next meeting, we are going to, quote, unquote,
37 formally tell you that, well, based on these ten criteria, we
38 have this, this, and this, and this, and that will essentially
39 help the council, and the committee, build the record, so that
40 you will be able to say that we decided not to do it because we
41 have this and this and this, even though I guess some of the
42 decisions may or may not be obvious to some, based on the
43 landings that we looked at, but at least --

44
45 I mean, if you have the time now to have the discussion, and
46 establish your rationale, by all means go ahead and go to the
47 conclusion, but it seems to me that maybe the time would be
48 short, and so then, next time, we'll go through this, and then,

1 given that landings are mostly in let's say federal waters,
2 given that we don't have information on the status of the stock
3 and this and this and that, and, as a council, you recommend it
4 this way or that way. That would seem, I guess, a course of
5 action, if that is something that the committee would like to
6 consider.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Mr. Anson.

9

10 **MR. ANSON:** That's what -- Dr. Diagne said basically what I was
11 going to say, is that, I mean, we can address the two example
12 species, if you will, that are used in this presentation, as
13 kind of a test case and go through the process of -- Look at the
14 factors to consider, yes and no, you know, line all that up, and
15 does it meet kind of the threshold that we determine would be a
16 requirement to go forward with some sort of plan amendment for
17 that Species A or Species B, in this case tripletail or African
18 pompano.

19

20 That's how I see that we would proceed, not only with those two,
21 but other species as well, and so I don't know if we have a
22 time, or a desire, I guess, to go through that process for those
23 two species, or bring it back at a future meeting, but that's
24 how I would see it, is, you know, look at the factors to
25 consider, and then do those, you know -- Do you get more yes
26 than no, and, again, what's the overall magnitude of the
27 fishery, and I think, to some extent, even though Magnuson
28 certainly would, you know, want the councils to defer towards
29 conservation, but does the magnitude of the fishery, and its
30 potential for being in jeopardy of, you know, being overfished -
31 - You know, does that kind of balance into the overall goals in
32 our resources for managing other species of fish too, and so I
33 think that's kind of where I sit right now.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Gill.

36

37 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, a comment, and,
38 Susan, when you indicated that, when we previously visited
39 African pompano, that motion failed, and that doesn't mean that
40 you can't make a motion now and bring it up, and it's not a
41 reconsideration then, because that reconsideration is only for
42 that meeting, and so we're starting off fresh, and, if you want
43 to bring it up again, that's certainly within the purview.

44

45 It seems, to me, the question here, given where we are, is
46 whether we think there is sufficient reason to begin work on
47 either species, and that's the real question, is should we enter
48 into an effort to look, in more detail, at either one of these

1 species, and it's not clear, to me, that we've reached that
2 level, on both, and maybe one, but part of the question, for me
3 to answer that, is the question of whether the states have, for
4 either species, a total allowable catch, and, if so, has there
5 been issues with controlling that, and my guess is, no, there
6 are no TACs on these species, in any of the states, and that's
7 not been an issue, but that hasn't been discussed, and so I
8 would like to clarify, in my own mind at least, that that's not
9 part of the issue.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Diaz.

12

13 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, I'm just thinking
14 about this, and Dr. Diagne gave us some information about these
15 two species, and it just -- To me, I agree with Susan, and
16 tripletail looks like the states are actively managing
17 tripletail, and they've got pretty good regulations in every
18 state, and I know that Dr. Shipp is not here, but it looks to me
19 like tripletail -- That the states are doing -- They're pretty
20 actively managing these fisheries, and I don't know that there's
21 a need for us to go down that road with that.

22

23 I did want to point out, in the presentation, one of the staff
24 had sent me a text, and, on the slide where it shows the African
25 pompano landed by state, it's showing that, in 2016, about
26 25,000 pounds or so was landed in Mississippi, and that was one
27 African pompano was picked up by a dockside surveyor, and that
28 was the result of one fish.

29

30 I have not seen a lot of African pompano in Mississippi, and
31 they are occasionally landed. Mike fishes offshore a good bit,
32 and he says they're occasionally landed, but it's not a common
33 fish that's landed in Mississippi, and so it's not a -- It's
34 just not something that occurs regularly in Mississippi, and
35 it's more of a rare thing, in my opinion, from what I've seen
36 through my time, and so, anyway, that's all I have for now.
37 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

38

39 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. Yes, I would probably
40 consider both of these species to be more or less rare-event
41 species, and so -- Yes, General Spraggins.

42

43 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I just wanted to know, and was that a state
44 record? 25,000 pounds is a pretty good-sized fish.

45

46 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. What is the will of the committee
47 here? We certainly have some questions that are posed to us,
48 and there are different processes here, and do we want to

1 develop a formal process for this? It sounds more along the
2 lines that we're considering a case-by-case basis, with motions,
3 and so I would offer that up to the committee, if we would like
4 to move forward, one way or the other, with either of these
5 species here. I am looking at you, Ms. Boggs.

6
7 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, I'm not going to speak to tripletail, because
8 Dr. Shipp is not here, and so I'm going to let that kind of
9 pass. Being the fact that I have this information in front of
10 me now, and it may be kind of along what Dale is saying, and
11 it's one or two fish that are driving these numbers, but African
12 pompano -- I am sitting here looking, and, in the last five
13 years, three of those years it was -- One year was all -- Two
14 years was all federal waters, with no state, and so it makes me
15 come back to take heed to what Captain Eric Schmidt brought to
16 us.

17
18 **I want to say over a year ago was that petition from the Florida**
19 **anglers, saying, hey, we're catching more and more of these in**
20 **federal waters, and this slide is showing me this, and so I**
21 **would like to make a motion to direct staff to initiate an**
22 **evaluation on a federal -- On managing African pompano. Is that**
23 **appropriate, Dr. Diagne?**

24
25 **DR. DIAGNE:** It sounds like it to me.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. We've got a motion on the table. Do
28 we have a second? It's seconded by Mr. Strelcheck. Okay. Any
29 discussion? Susan, do you need to provide any -- Mr. Anson.

30
31 **MR. ANSON:** Susan, "an evaluation on managing", and so what
32 additional information would you be anticipating be brought
33 forward, I guess, than what's already been provided?

34
35 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Ms. Boggs.

36
37 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, to ask the states about stock status and other
38 available relevant information, and I don't know if they've done
39 with you, other than gather the landings, and to evaluate with
40 SERO and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center with a
41 recommendation, as stated in this document that Dr. Diagne
42 presented to us.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Strelcheck.

45
46 **MR. STRELCHECK:** First, Susan, I would agree, and I would
47 recommend that we change it to "initiate an evaluation on
48 whether African pompano is in need of federal conservation and

1 management", or, sorry, "in need of conservation and
2 management". No "federal".

3
4 **MS. BOGGS:** I am certainly fine with that edit.

5
6 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Then I guess the struggle I'm having is, you
7 know, we brought forward tripletail, and it was a council
8 recommendation from Dr. Shipp, and I don't see, really, a strong
9 need to evaluate that, given just the data we've been presented
10 this morning.

11
12 With African pompano, you know, we're talking about a very small
13 amount of landings, 30,000 or 40,000 or 50,000 pounds, and there
14 is management that extends into federal waters, but this is more
15 like what we've seen with Florida pompano, in terms of fishermen
16 petitioning, you know, us to at least evaluate it, and so I
17 seconded the motion, primarily just to have conversation around
18 this, and I've been struggling to really kind of see the broader
19 need for conservation and management.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thanks, Andy. Mr. Gill.

22
23 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I'm along the lines
24 of Andy, but I would like to hear from -- Since this is
25 primarily an Alabama and Florida fishery, I would like to hear
26 from those states, in terms of their views on their management
27 of African pompano, so that we can incorporate that in our
28 thinking on whether we ought to be considering for federal
29 management.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Ms. Boggs.

32
33 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, is that not just a part of what we discussed,
34 that it would be -- Part of this management, for this motion, is
35 to ask the states about stock status, and are we going to do it
36 right here, and just bypass this motion?

37
38 **MR. GILL:** No, Susan, that's not what I was getting to, and I'm
39 talking about the more general aspect of how they see their
40 management of this species, whether they see considerations that
41 are either plus or minus, and I don't know what their
42 perspective is, but they're the ones that have got all the
43 landings, and Eric has brought up an issue, in terms of the
44 landings on the FLorida side, but, if the landings are in those
45 states, that broad overview of where they're at, and how they
46 see it, I think is part of that discussion.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Anson, do you want to take a stab at

1 this, and then I will go?
2

3 **MR. ANSON:** Sure, Mr. Chair. So not formally speaking for the
4 state, but informally speaking for the state, we don't have a
5 lot of information, nor collect a lot of information, outside of
6 the information that was provided here in the presentation. As
7 Dr. Diagne alluded to, based on the landings, it is primarily a
8 federally-located species, if you will, for at least off of
9 Alabama, and so we just don't -- You know, we have not had a
10 desire, or a need, I guess, based on the location of the fish
11 being in federal waters.
12

13 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** From a Florida perspective, we obviously
14 don't have a specific stock status, because it's not something
15 that is assessed at a statewide level. We do have fairly
16 conservation-oriented regulations, I would say, and kind of the
17 way that the fishery operates in both state and federal waters
18 is a little bit different, and we do allow for spearing in
19 federal waters, and, you know, I think that's been some of the
20 concerns there, is relative to the bag and trip limits that we
21 have in Florida, and that has been some of the concern on the
22 stakeholder side of things there, that maybe it's a little bit
23 too restrictive along those lines, but we do that for an
24 intentional reason, and that's -- There is evidence of spawning
25 aggregations out in federal waters, and so that is why we try to
26 limit the amount of harvest in that way, by constraining it to
27 those bag limits.
28

29 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Diaz.
30

31 **MR. DIAZ:** I am struggling on what to do with this motion, and I
32 appreciate the fact that we've got a lot of people that signed
33 the petition, and I think that we should always take that
34 seriously, but, like a couple of folks have said, I just don't
35 know what we could do federally with this. I am thinking of
36 wenchman, and, you know, we just didn't have any information on
37 wenchman, and we really can't do anything with wenchman, and I
38 feel like that's where we're going to be with African pompano,
39 and, for that reason, I'm worried that this is going to be
40 something that's going to take a lot of council time, and we've
41 got so many issues that we have to address, and that's my
42 concern.
43

44 I'm still not sure exactly how I'm going to vote on this, but I
45 just don't think that we're going to have enough information, at
46 the end of the day, to do anything with this, and I will be
47 shocked if we do, and so, anyway, I'm sitting here stewing on
48 what to do with it, but I don't like the fact that a lot of

1 people signed a petition that's asking us to do something, but I
2 just don't think there's anything that we will be able to do.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. We've had a fair amount of discussion
5 on this. Any more comments? Okay. We've got a motion on the
6 table by Ms. Boggs, and seconded by Andy, to direct staff to
7 initiate an evaluation on whether African pompano needs
8 conservation and management. **I think this is probably a hand**
9 **vote here, and so all those in favor, please raise your hand;**
10 **all those opposed.** Okay. **The motion fails one to eight.**

11
12 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** I voted, and I'm not on your committee.
13 Sorry.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay, and so -- Ms. Boggs.

16
17 **MS. BOGGS:** I don't know how the appropriate motion would be,
18 and I'm just going to go ahead and do it. **I would like to make**
19 **a motion to remove tripletail from consideration for**
20 **conservation and management.**

21
22 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Mr. Gill.

23
24 **MR. GILL:** I guess I'm a little confused. It's not under
25 consideration, and so how are we going to remove it?

26
27 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Ms. Boggs.

28
29 **MS. BOGGS:** We made a motion. Dr. Shipp made a motion, at the
30 last meeting, after I made a motion on African pompano, and my
31 motion failed, and his motion passed.

32
33 **DR. DIAGNE:** That is my recollection.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** So I guess the question is, and I'm looking
36 at staff here, is do we need a motion to remove this from
37 consideration, or, if we just don't pass a motion to include it
38 for consideration, does that effectively do the same thing?

39
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, I think that would be the same
41 thing. You would not have a motion to move forward with
42 considering those ten factors that are in the National Standard
43 Guidelines that we did for Florida pompano, but I am looking
44 down at Mara, to see if she agrees.

45
46 **MS. LEVY:** I don't remember what the exact motion was that
47 passed, and so I was trying to look that up.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Ms. Boggs.
2
3 **MS. BOGGS:** There was a motion, and so if we could find that
4 motion, and it was either the last meeting or the meeting prior,
5 but there was a motion that was passed, at Full Council, to
6 consider tripleteail for federal management, and Dr. Shipp made
7 that motion, and it passed.
8
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** It was from the October 2022
10 council meeting, I believe.
11
12 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. While staff is looking that up, Mr.
13 Anson.
14
15 **MR. ANSON:** I'm sure they're looking it up, but it was from
16 October, to direct staff to evaluate factors in determining
17 whether tripleteail is in need of federal management, and that
18 carried nine to six with two abstentions.
19
20 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Gill.
21
22 **MR. GILL:** So that's what we just did, and that's different than
23 having it up for consideration for federal conservation and
24 management, and so I think we've achieved what that motion was,
25 based on that reading by Mr. Anson.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Go ahead, Ms. Boggs.
28
29 **MS. BOGGS:** So this was a presentation that Dr. Diagne has
30 given, and it gave us several factors to look at, but it wasn't
31 a formal presentation, and now I've lost it, and I don't know
32 that this presentation -- Okay. Let me back up.
33
34 So the factors are gather and synthesize data, coordinate with
35 states, ask the states about stock status and other available
36 relevant information, and evaluate SERO and Southeast Fisheries
37 Science Center recommendations, if any, and so I don't know if
38 we have done all of those things, and I am just trying to make
39 it very clear that we are through with tripleteail.
40
41 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. I think that's fair. It's
42 straightforward, and it's essentially doing the same thing, and
43 so why don't we just move forward with this motion that's on the
44 table here? We have the motion from Ms. Boggs, and it's
45 seconded by Mr. Broussard, to remove tripleteail from
46 consideration for conservation and management. Ms. Boggs.
47
48 **MS. BOGGS:** I apologize, and would it help to use the words "to

1 remove tripletail from further consideration for conservation
2 and management”?

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Broussard, are you okay with that?
5 Okay. So the updated motion is to remove tripletail from
6 further consideration for conservation and management. Okay.
7 Is there anyone opposed to this motion? Seeing none, the motion
8 carries. Okay. Dr. Diagne, are we good with this agenda item?
9

10 **DR. DIAGNE:** Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. Okay, and
13 so that will move us on to the next agenda item, and I will pass
14 it right back over to you, Dr. Diagne, for working through the
15 action guide.
16

17 **SSC REPORT ON ALLOCATION APPROACHES PRESENTATION**

18
19 **DR. DIAGNE:** Thank you again, Mr. Chair. For this item on our
20 agenda, it is going to be the SSC report on an allocation
21 approach presentation. Dr. Jim Nance will review the SSC's
22 comments and recommendations provided in response to a
23 presentation given by Dr. John Ward on an allocation approach,
24 based on a simulation model, that could include economic,
25 biological, social, and ecological factors.
26

27 The committee should discuss the information presented, ask
28 questions, and could consider the method presented and comments
29 provided during future discussions on allocations. Thank you.
30

31 **DR. JIM NANCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As was mentioned, Dr.
32 John Ward gave a presentation on an alternative allocation
33 approach, based on a theoretical model that could integrate
34 economic, social, biological, and ecological variables. He
35 reviewed the assumptions and the steps to consider in the
36 proposed modeling approach, including a surplus production model
37 and derived biomass and effort levels. He discussed the
38 interaction between ecological and human dimensions and
39 considered the effects of interactions on markets. He also
40 looked at various scenarios, including open access and fisheries
41 managed with ACLs and IFQ programs.
42

43 After his presentation, the SSC asked whether each approach
44 proposed could be used to assist in allocating resources between
45 the recreational and commercial sectors. Dr. Ward indicated
46 that it would depend on the manner in which the different user
47 groups were specified in the function for maximization. It was
48 noted that the bioeconomic simulation that he presented could

1 help determine the optimal allocations in fishery resources.
2 The SSC, during this deliberation, thought that more information
3 was needed to develop a clear understanding of the approach
4 presented, including model documentation. With that, Mr. Chair,
5 that ends that presentation.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Thank you, as always, Dr. Nance. Are
8 there any questions for Dr. Nance on the allocation approaches
9 here? Yes, sir, Mr. Gill.

10
11 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Dr. Nance,
12 and not a question, or, well, maybe it is a question, and so the
13 purpose of this presentation to the SSC was to demonstrate a
14 method that could ostensibly incorporate economic data into a
15 biological model to be helpful in determining allocation as an
16 alternative way to the historical landings approach that is
17 currently used.

18
19 My conclusion, from looking at this, is that, yes, it needs
20 further development, but, yes, there is a reasonable possibility
21 that that's what can be done, and it just needs to be further
22 explored, and is that a fair conclusion from the SSC, based on
23 your presentation?
24

25 **DR. NANCE:** I think so, in the fact that what Dr. Ward presented
26 was a theoretical model that had those three aspects developed,
27 biological, economic, and social, within a model. Those are
28 certainly models that could be developed and looked at. Dr.
29 Wade Griffin, at Texas A&M, had a shrimp model that had
30 biological and the economic applications that we used
31 successfully to look at different things, and so those types of
32 models have been, and could be, developed, and so it would take
33 time to be able to look at what you needed in a model like this,
34 what was its purpose, and be able to put the data into it to be
35 able to get the information out that you wanted.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Anson.

38
39 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Dr. Nance, and so what is the path
40 forward, I guess? Is there a lack of funding in order to do
41 that, or did the SSC discuss, as far as future work?
42

43 **DR. NANCE:** We certainly wanted to see if there is, you know,
44 any documentation on a model like this, and, once we were able
45 to see that documentation, to future evaluate it, to be able to,
46 I think, give a better evaluation of the steps forward in the
47 future, not necessarily with this particular model, but with
48 models like it. I mean, there is certainly individuals out

1 there that have possibly similar models, and this was a
2 theoretical model that John presented, and it's not that he has
3 it developed, but it's theoretical, and to be able to pass
4 forward from that.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Dr. Walter.

7

8 **DR. WALTER:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Jim, for
9 presenting this. There is a number of questions that some of
10 our staff had, particularly our economists, in moving this from
11 the theoretical to the practical and to -- Because that's really
12 where the rubber is going to meet the road, is when you
13 parameterize these models with data and then make real-life
14 allocation decisions.

15

16 I think one of the concerns was that they're going to be solely
17 dependent on the data that's put in and that maybe we don't have
18 the data for that, so that we might -- If we don't have the
19 data, or if the data is in conflict with -- I mean, we may have
20 two sets of values for the same species, and then which one do
21 you put in, and then embarking upon it may not give a clear-cut
22 decision process for the council on allocations, because it's
23 not always clear-cut, and I am just wondering what the SSC's
24 thought on what -- On how we're going to get that hard data to
25 be able to use it, and whether that's something that is possible
26 in the near-term.

27

28 **DR. NANCE:** John, I appreciate that, and I know the economists
29 there, from the Center and the Region, were looking at the data
30 that would need to go into there, and so I think what we need to
31 look at is look at a theoretical model, and do we have data that
32 can be used to parameterize that, and I think, if we do, then we
33 can move forward on some of those things, but it's going to take
34 looking at what we need and if that data is available and not
35 just theory data, but actual hard data that we can be able to
36 use to be able to incorporate it in a model like that.

37

38 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Mr. Gill.

39

40 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, John, for
41 that comment, and so part of the purpose of Dr. Ward's
42 presentation was to demonstrate the process, because his
43 contention is that existing data is sufficient to provide
44 information to help in that process. Will it be black-and-white
45 definitive, that this is the way you ought to go? No, and we're
46 not that good, and so his next steps, as Kevin asked, is he used
47 a hypothetical fish, real data and a hypothetical fish, to
48 demonstrate the process.

1
2 The next step that he's going to work on is to pick a particular
3 species in the Gulf, take the existing data for that, rerun the
4 model to demonstrate the potential for use, relative to that
5 species, which gets to the real-life aspects of consideration,
6 and so that's the next step, and, yes, is it all going to work
7 together, we don't know, but the contention, from the Center, is
8 we don't have the data, and his contention is the opposite,
9 that, yes, there is data, yes, we can do something, and, yes, it
10 will be useful, and that's what the process is trying to
11 demonstrate, and, if it's successful, then that's great, and, if
12 it's not, well, that one didn't work, but, at this point, he's
13 doing it on his own, and the more power to him, and I hope he's
14 successful.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay. Any other discussion or questions or
17 comments for Dr. Nance? Okay. Thank you, Dr. Nance. We
18 appreciate it.

19
20 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN SWEETMAN:** Okay, and so I had no other business. I'm
23 going to look around the table. We're a little bit ahead of
24 schedule here, and so all right. I am not hearing any, and so I
25 will turn it back over to you, Mr. Chair.

26
27 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 5, 2023.)

28
29 - - -